

## COMMISSION ON DISABILITY

In its thirteenth year of service, the Arlington Commission on Disability has continued to provide information, referral, guidance, and technical assistance to Arlington officials, residents, public and private agencies, and others to insure that people with physical, sensory, cognitive, and other disabilities have equal access to Town facilities, services, and programs. The Commission consists of nine commissioners, all volunteers. As mandated by state law, the majority of Commissioners have a physical, cognitive, or sensory disability. This mandate brings an intimate and informed understanding of disabilities to the Commission's agenda and ultimate decisions.

Coordination and implementation of the Commission's agenda and goals continues to be handled by Jack Jones of the Arlington Office of Housing and Disability Programs. Cooperation between the Commission and this office is effective and efficient. The Commission continues to occupy office and meeting space in the Senior Center building at 20 Academy Street.

In 2006 the Commission for the first time reported to the Town Meeting on its history and future goals. Also in 2006 the Commission submitted four warrant articles for the consideration of Town Meeting. The proposed articles addressed the need to increase pedestrian safety and to encourage universal design. As a result of the warrant articles the Selectmen promised to hold hearings during FY 2007 on the issue of clearing snow from the Donald R. Marquis Minuteman Trail. In 2006 the Commission requested \$200,000 in CDBG funding for curb ramp work, only \$25,000 in funding was approved.

During 2006 the Commission mourned the passing of two dedicated long time members of the Commission, Joe Giurleo and Tom Boudreau. The Commission and Town were fortunate to receive donations in the memory of Tom Boudreau that have been used for a memorial bench at the Dallin Playfield and to fund training on disability issues.

In the fall, the Commission endorsed the development of a residential program by the Arlington Housing Authority for people with mental retardation. At the November meeting there was an election of officers as required by the bylaws of the Commission that resulted in a new chair and vice chair. The Commission also heard complaints about the audible pedestrian signals installed on Summer Street. The Commission will continue to address this issue in 2007. In 2006 the Commission was successful in installing a path of travel from Varum Street to the Donald R. Marquis Minuteman Trail.

Educating the community regarding disabilities is an ongoing agenda item of the Commission. During 2006 the eighth annual Arlington Disability Commission newsletter was published in order to provide information about the Commission's projects and disability laws. In

addition to the annual newsletter the Commission has an occasional column in the Arlington Advocate. In 2006 the Commission participated in Town Day to acquaint the public with its role and to disseminate information about the Americans with Disabilities Act and accessible Town programs and facilities.

The Commission's goals in 2007 will continue to revolve around the parameters of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The 2007 agenda includes hosting a regional access monitor training, addressing the issue of chair lifts in Town Hall, preparing community disaster plans for people with disabilities, to continue to improve pedestrian safety by installing additional curb cut ramps, and monitoring audible pedestrian signals within the Town.

The Commission meets on the third Wednesday of each month at 4:00 P.M. in the conference room of the Housing and Disability Program Office located in suite #203, 20 Academy St., Arlington (the Senior Center Building). Meetings are open to the public and citizens are invited to attend.